2.0 Best Practices Review

This chapter presents a review of tour bus management state of the practice. Experience is reported for selected cities that share with the District of Columbia the need to accommodate large numbers of tour buses. The following cities in the United States and Canada are included in the review:

- Boston, Massachusetts
- Charleston, South Carolina
- Ottawa, Canada
- Vancouver, Canada
- Baltimore, Maryland
- Savannah, Georgia
- Atlantic City, New Jersey
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- New York, New York
- Kennebunkport, Maine

For each North American city reviewed, plans and specific measures for tour bus management are described, distinctive features unique to local circumstances are noted, and the relevance to conditions in the District of Columbia is discussed, including key insights that might be applicable to the development of a local tour bus management program. The review of North American cities is followed by a summary of current experience in a range of European cities. The reduced level of detail for European cities, relative to the North American examples, reflects limitations on available information. Despite the more general nature of the information provided on European cities, this section of the review also addresses the most central questions concerning best practices.

2.1 U.S. and Canadian Cities

Key tour bus management practices in the U.S. and Canadian cities reviewed are summarized in the table below and discussed in the text that follows. The level of detail varies by city, depending on the extent of information available.

TOUR BUS PARKING MANAGEMENT MEASURES IN NORTH AMERICAN CITIES

	DESIGNATED CURBSIDE LOADING AREAS	DESIGNATED CURBSIDE PARKING AREAS	PERIPHERAL LONG-TERM SURFACE PARKING LOTS	CENTRAL OFF-STREET TOUR BUS PARKING FACILIITES	PROHIBIT PARKING AT TRANSIT BUS STOPS, METERS, AND/OR LOADING ZONES	ALLOW PARKING AT TRANSIT BUS STOPS, METERS AND/OR LOADING ZONES	IDLING LIMITS	DAILY PERMIT REQUIRED FOR TOUR BUS OPERATION	PROHIBITION OF TOUR BUS OPERATION ON DESIGNATED ROADWAYS/
Boston	8 locations - 15-minute limit	1 location – 3-hour limit	2 locations	Surface lot close to historic district	X		5 minutes		
Charleston	6 locations	X			X			X	X
Ottawa	10-minute limit	30 metered spaces	1 location	1 surface parking lot	X		10 minutes	$20 fee includes parking	X
Vancouver	X	Several zones with 2-hour limits	X	X		X	X		X
Baltimore	X		2 locations - $20-$24/day		X				
Savannah	X		X		X			X	X
Atlantic City			X						
Philadelphia	X*	X*		Garage/ Transportation center					
New York	X	X			X		3 minutes	X - $1.50/day	X
Kennebunkport	X		Permanent facility location To be determined		X			X- $35/day includes parking	

* Existing conditions; alternative measures to be implemented.

TOUR BUS PARKING MANAGEMENT MEASURES IN NORTH AMERICAN CITIES

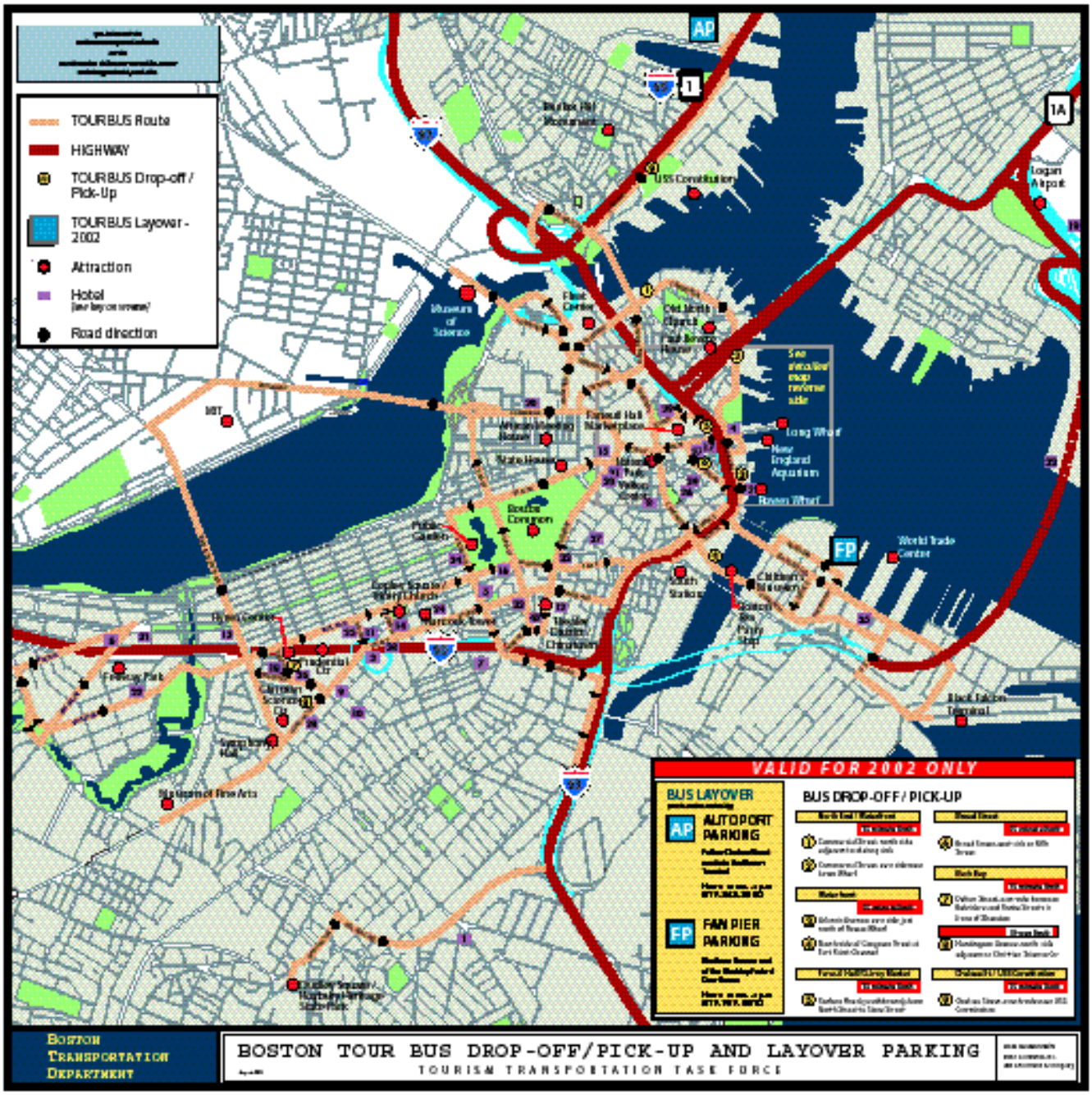
CONTINUED

	DESIGNATION OF RECOMMENDED/ REQUIRED ROUTES	TRANSFER REQUIRED TO CIRCULATOR OR WALKING	RESTRICTIONS ON VOLUME OR DENSITY OF TOUR BUS OPERATIONS	COORDINATED FEE STRUCTURE AT PARKING FACILITIES	REGISTRATION/ RESERVATION SYSTEM	HELP LINE
Boston	X					
Charleston	X		X			
Ottawa	X					
Vancouver	X					
Baltimore		Proposed		X		
Savannah	Individual routing plan required	X	X			
Atlantic City		X		X	X	
Philadelphia		Connections to additional sites				
New York	X				Advance reservation required	
Kennebunkport			X		X	X

2.1.1 Boston, Massachusetts

The Boston Transportation Department issued a tour bus guidelines parking map, illustrated below, and available at http://www.cityofboston.gov/transportation/tour_bus.asp). The map was developed with input from the Tourism Transportation Task Force at the outset of the 2002 fall tourist season. Locations around Boston are identified on the map (in light blue) for tour bus drop-off/pick-up and for long-term (layover) bus parking; designated bus routes are shown in orange. Detailed information regarding tour bus regulations and contact information for tour bus operators also is provided. Regulations prohibit tour bus parking or drop-off/pick-up from metered spaces, transit bus stops, and commercial spaces. No restrictions on routing are identified. The map is a useful mechanism for conveying the spatial relationship between Boston's plan for designated bus facilities (short-term drop-off/pick-up, and long-term layover parking), major historic and cultural attractions, and the core center's major hotels.

The Tourism Task Force has also suggested a concept-design for a centralized visitor gateway center that could provide an inter-modal hub for drop-off/pick-up and layover of tour buses, and the convergence of sight-seeing circulator bus or trolley services. Additional functions would include an orientation center, hotel booking, and museum ticket sales. Locations being considered include City Hall Plaza, the waterfront, the South Boston waterfront, and Charlestown Navy Yard. However, Vineet Gupta, Director of policy and planning for the Boston Transportation Department and a member of the Task Force, is not certain that the city has a proper location for a gateway facility. Gupta suggests that a more feasible alternative is to establish several small satellite visitor centers well distributed around the central core.



Relevance to the District: Boston, like Washington, has a compact core with dense clustering of historic and cultural attractions. Like Washington, Boston too is a Mecca for tourism. Also, neighborhoods abut the central core, and problems with bus routing, noise, and emissions generated during idling are endemic. Boston's tour bus guidelines are a proactive approach to these issues and incorporate common elements found in the plans of other cities that have addressed tour bus needs effectively. The guidelines have achieved a degree of rationalization that balances the multiple interests of the City, its neighborhoods and residences, and commercial and tourism interests. Clear designation of physical facilities (curbside and at remote satellite locations) for tour buses is the most basic plan element and is transferable to the District.

2.1.2 Charleston, South Carolina

One of the distinctive features of Charleston's management of tour buses is that no large bus (> 25 feet in length) may conduct a tour in the various districts of the city without a touring permit authorized by the tourism director. A separate permit is required for each trip into the districts for the purposes of transporting passengers to or from a single designated point, such as hotels, restaurants, the visitor information center or the tour boat facility. The tourism director, in coordination with the director of traffic and transportation, may limit the number of permits in use at any one time for the purposes of traffic management. The ordinance, however, sets an upper bound of no more than six (6) permits per hour between the hours of 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM and 2:00 PM to 4:30 PM. No more than four (4) permits per hour are granted to large buses between the hours of 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM, and 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM. The route and time of transportation (as noted on the permit) are at the discretion of the tourism director upon consideration of such factors as traffic, the width of streets, and the number of permits in use. Buses are granted permission for drop-off and pick-up and associated incidental movement to the designated discharge or pick-up point. Buses are not permitted to circulate through city districts in the interim duration between discharge of passengers and subsequent pick-up.

The Charleston City ordinance[4] also requires the following:

- Licensed tour guide on all tours
- Operation of large buses limited to two perimeter routes, and segments of other designated streets during non-commuter hours
- Designation of specific drop-off and pick-up locations within the city
- Required display of permit placard on vehicle
- The Gaillard Municipal Auditorium and other locations approved by the director of traffic and transportation, with the consent of the City Council committee on traffic and transportation (and designated in the Office of Tourism) are the only approved long-term parking facilities for large buses.

A map illustrating authorized routes, drop-off and pick-up locations, and long-term parking facilities is shown below (see http://www.charlestontour.com/html/map.html).

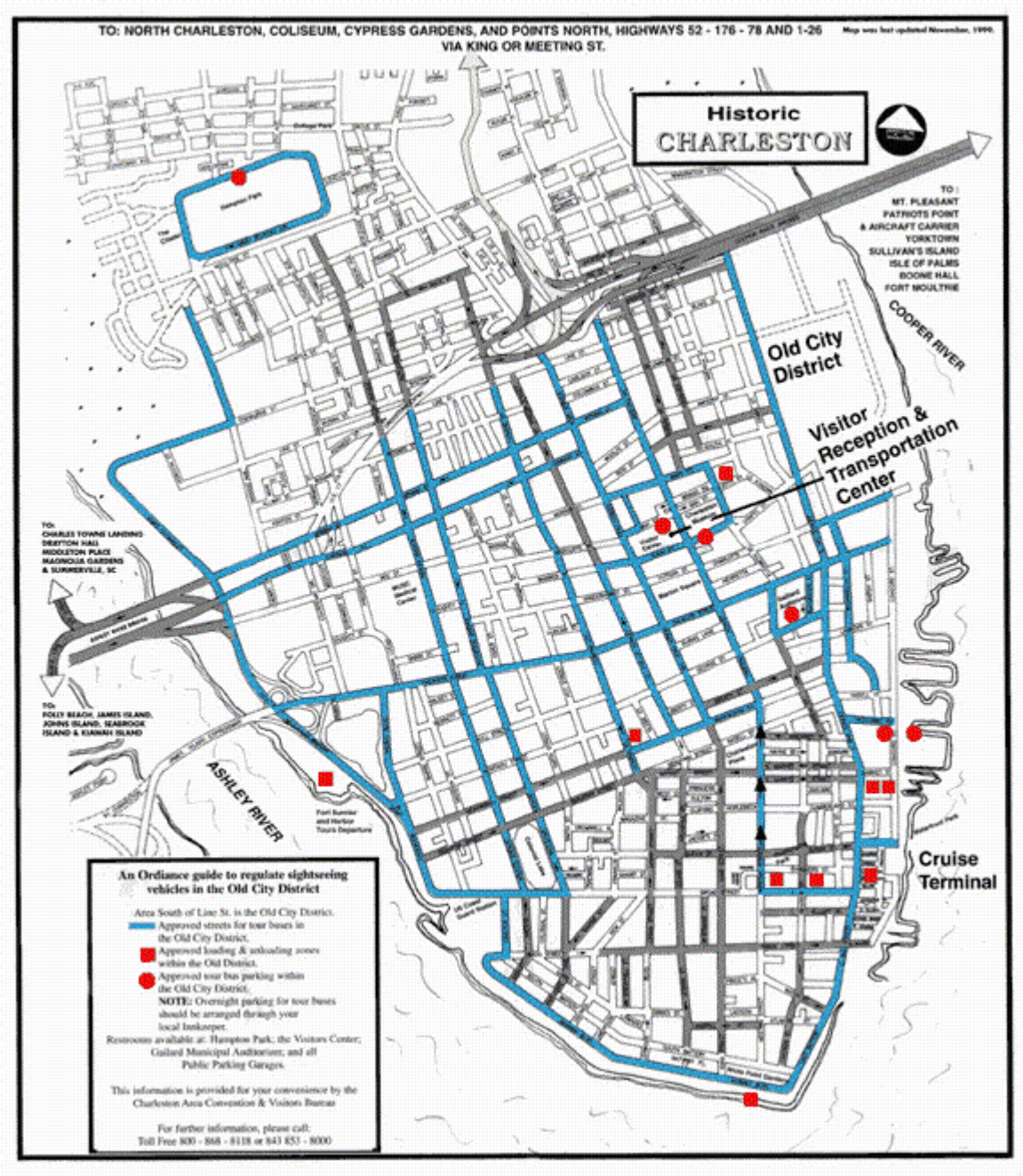
Relevance to the District: Charleston and several other small cities, such as Kennebunkport, ME, Savannah, GA, and Palm Beach, FL, have adopted a stringent regulatory regime that sets absolute limits on the number of tour buses allowed to operate at any one time within their jurisdiction. It is unlikely, however, that a regulatory regime that sets absolute limits on the number of tour buses would be feasible within Washington, DC. On public policy grounds, it sends the wrong message (lack of hospitality to outside 'guests') and, moreover, it may not produce the desired

[4] City of Charleston, South Carolina, Ord. No. 1999-135, adopted September 20, 1999 (Supplement No. 30), Chapter 29, Tourism, Division 5, Large Buses.

balance between the economic development value that tour buses and their passengers hold for the District, and the interests of business and residences to be reasonably free from the negative externalities that stem from tour bus operations. However, such an approach may be appropriate in certain historic or congested neighborhoods.

Ordinances that place an absolute limit on the number of allowable buses simultaneously in operation may raise legal issues (violation of the interstate commerce clause). One thing seems clear[5]: there needs to be a direct nexus between the absolute limit set on the number of allowable permits in use at any one time and objective factors related to the ability of the street network to handle the allowable number of buses, and the ability of sensitive receptors to absorb air and noise emissions. This nexus needs to be well documented in a series of validated studies. This cause and effect relationship needs to be in place in order to exercise properly the jurisdiction's police power to protect the 'public health, safety and welfare'. Administrative discretion needs to be kept to a minimum so that the limits set are not considered arbitrary or capricious, therefore a violation of due process.

[5] Palm Beach, FL town attorney comments, Report of the Strategic Planning Board Meeting, July 10, 2002.


TO: NORTH CHARLESTON, COLISEUM, CYPRESS GARDENS, AND POINTS NORTH, HIGHWAYS 52 - 176 - 78 AND 1-26
VIA KING OR MEETING ST.
Historic
CHARLESTON
TO:
MT. PLEASANT
PATRIOTS POINT
& AIRCRAFT CARRIER
YORKTOWN
SULLIVAN'S ISLAND
ISLE OF PALMS
BOONE HALL
FORT MOULTRIE
COOPER RIVER
Old City
District
Visitor
Reception &
Transportation
Center
TO:
CHARLES TOWNE LANDING
DRAYTON HALL
MIDDLETON PLACE
MAGNOLIA GARDENS
& SUMMERVILLE, SC
TO:
FOLEY BEACH, JAMES ISLAND,
JOHNS ISLAND, SEABROOK
ISLAND & KIAWAH ISLAND
ASHLEY RIVER
Fort Sumter
and Harbor
Tours Departure
Cruise
Terminal
An Ordiance guide to regulate sightseeing vehicles in the Old City District
Area South of Line St. is the Old City District.
Approved streets for tour buses in the Old City District.
Approved loading & unloading zones within the Old District.
Approved tour bus parking within the Old City District.
NOTE: Overnight parking for tour buses should be arranged through your local Innkeeper.
Restrooms available at: Hampton Park; the Visitors Center; Gaillard Municipal Auditorium; and all Public Parking Garages.
This information is provided for your convenience by the Charleston Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
For further information, please call:
Toll Free 800 - 868 - 8118 or 843 853 - 8000

2.1.3 Ottawa, Canada

Ottawa has initiated special tour bus parking zones from May through October, to relieve congestion during the peak summer tourist season. Until recently, there were two designated tour bus parking lots in the central part of the city: one at Lebreton Flats (between Duke & Fleet, east of Booth Street, which offers free parking) and at Slater & Laurier (which offered parking only between the hours of 6 pm and 7 am for $20 per night). The Slater/Laurier Lot is no longer available to tour buses. There are two designated 10-minute pick-up and drop-off spots and at least 30 on-street metered tour bus parking stalls, at a cost of $1 for 20 minutes. Tour bus operators may not idle for more than 5 minutes due to the city's noise by-law.

A map illustrating Ottawa's tour bus management plan is shown below (see, also, http://www.city.ottawa.on.ca/city_services/parking/16_8_en.shtml).

Legend

On-street metered tour bus parking spaces $1 / 20 minutes

Pick-up and drop-off anytime 10 minutes maximum

Off-peak 10 minute pick-up and drop-off:
Monday to Friday (9 am to 3 pm and after 6 pm),
Saturday and Sunday (all day)

***Relevance to the District*:** Ottawa's plan incorporates several key elements common to a good tour bus management plan that could be emulated in Washington, DC. A feature of note specific to Ottawa is the use of color-coded meters, which facilitates easy enforcement for curbside use management. The meters also provide a needed revenue stream to the city.

This system is potentially compatible with the implementation of peak/non-peak price differentials, using smart-card/smart-meter technology, to help moderate and control the distribution of demand throughout the day.

2.1.4 Vancouver, Canada

Vancouver, Canada has taken a strongly proactive approach that recognizes the economic value of tour buses and balances the operational needs of tour buses with measures to limit intrusive effects on the environmental, quality of life in the city, and general traffic and parking conditions. A key feature of Vancouver's approach is user class zoning of on-street parking spaces, with tour buses permitted to use several different user classes. For example, Vancouver has established zones for passenger or material loading and unloading, including bus, taxi, commercial, tour bus, rush hour, special event, police, handicapped and temporary zones. Tour buses are allowed to use several parking zone categories: i. commercial lanes[6]; ii. commercial loading zones, tour bus loading zones, and passenger vehicle loading zones; iii. parking meters (with full payment); iv. 'No Parking Anytime' zones (5-minute limit).

In a **"No Parking Anytime"** zone, vehicles are allowed to park to load or unload goods, or to take on or discharge passengers for up to 5 minutes.

Vancouver also incorporates several other desired elements characteristic of a good plan. These include designation of four long-term parking facilities for tour buses only, strategically distributed within the city. These facilities are in addition to several on-street zones designated for long-term (2-hour) parking of tour buses. The Downtown Transportation Plan also designates specific arterial-based routes in the form of a specific sub-network that provides connectivity to all relevant attractions for large buses to minimize routing through historic and residential districts. Strict enforcement of no idling laws complements the approach.

***Relevance to the District*:** Vancouver's use of commercial loading zones when unoccupied to accommodate tour bus passenger loading and unloading, its authorization to use contiguous parking meters, and allowing tour bus use of 'No Parking Anytime' zones greatly expands utilization of existing curbside space. This innovative concept of shared use is directly relevant to the competing demands for on-street parking facing the District. Another potentially transferable concept is user class zoning of on-street parking spaces.

As part of its proactive, collaborative and consensus-seeking approach, the City of Vancouver also organized a Task Force (an approach similar to Boston's) consisting of

[6] **Commercial lane -** any lane that abuts commercial property is classified as commercial. Only vehicles with commercial identification are allowed to stop in these lanes.

relevant stakeholders to examine large bus impacts (including but not limited to tour buses) on the city and its districts. The resulting report[7] documents a set of general recommendations in the following areas: enforcement, communication, improved technologies, route network development, urban design and development, parks issues, and future dialogue. The recommendations presented below in summary form are of particular relevance to the District:

- A city-wide bus zone that would restrict the number of buses in certain parts of the City was rejected. It was determined that this action would not achieve the desired results of minimizing bus impacts because of the growth of tourism in mixed used areas, as well as enforcement issues for out-of-town carriers. The Task Force also considered restriction of the area of operation of tour buses to tourist-oriented areas of the city; however, the Task Force did not recommend specific bus zone restrictions due to the detrimental economic impacts on other tourism sectors such as shops and services.
- An on-going action-oriented working group should address location-specific issues (e.g., noise, emissions, parking, loading/unloading, traffic congestion and safety). This group would be available to the public and resolve issues with interaction between groups such as bus and motor coach operators, and stakeholders (tourism and hotel). It would provide mechanisms for input and participation from affected communities and the general public.
- Progressive intervention (i.e. sliding fees) should be applied for continued non-compliance with local ordinances by private operators.
- Major hotels should develop bus management plans and have staff available to manage bus activity during high demand periods
- That City staff should examine options for bus staging areas for large regional attractions within the Downtown Core.
- The City, when considering zoning or rezoning applications and/or building permit approvals, should consider the character of the area and the extent to which new development will attract commercial vehicles. City staff should develop and enforce development criteria to ensure that hotels and major tourist destination development projects have adequate parking, stopping, loading and unloading provisions for buses.
- Specific provisions should be implemented for tour buses serving or operating in the vicinity of parks (particularly relevant to the monument core of the Washington, DC). These include: park-specific, environmentally-friendly bus parking plans that consider: ease of operation for bus movement; safe unloading of passengers; reduced conflict with other forms of traffic; reduced visual impact with proper landscape buffering; and adequate facility size and geometry. This would require the involvement and financial support of the National Park Service and the Smithsonian Institution.

[7] See *City of Vancouver, Bus Impact Task Force Report for City Council*, July 2000, at http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/ctyclerk/000711/rrl.pdf

2.1.5 Baltimore, Maryland

The Baltimore City Office of Transportation enforces a new tour bus parking policy for the city. Under this policy, tour buses are now required to load and unload passengers at designated on-street locations only. Parking of buses is only permitted at designated lots (J and C of Camden Yards, and the Central Parking Systems Facility located on Key Highway). Approximately 300 tour buses can be accommodated each day. Daily fees range between $20-$24. Illegally parked buses on city streets are fined $77 per citation. This new policy was the outcome of a collaborative process that included multiple stakeholders (i.e., Office of Transportation, the Parking Authority, Department of Planning, Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association, the Maryland Stadium Authority, National Aquarium, Maryland Motorcoach Association, Maryland Schoolbus Association, Maryland Chemical Company, and Central Parking Systems). The Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association disseminated the new policy to the tour bus industry. A map illustrating the plan is shown below (see also http://www.baltimore.org/pages/trans_maps_motorcoach.htm).

As part of a major initiative[8] by the Baltimore City Heritage Area Association (BCHA), a bus loop and/or heritage trolley system is proposed to link satellite-parking facilities (including facilities that accommodate tour buses) with heritage and cultural attractions within several heritage and cultural districts within the City. This would potentially allow many of these attractions to be linked via a tourist transit system. Additional streetscape and pedestrian amenities (including a critical new way finding system, see http://www.ci.baltimore.md.us/government/heritage/images/pedway.jpg) would provide accessibility to and help encourage use of the proposed transit system.

***Relevance to the District*:** Baltimore has developed a simple but effective plan that provides the essential elements needed to manage tour buses. These include strategically located public parking lots for tour buses that are centrally located to the main tourist attractions; on-street loading/unloading passenger zones, also well situated to the main visitor attractions; and specific routing that ties these two elements together. The plan was the result of a collaborative and consensual process. The goal was not only to keep tour buses off neighborhood streets (a major issue generating many complaints), but also to proactively address the needs of the industry and maintain and increase the economic value to the city that it provides.

[8] See, e.g., Baltimore City Heritage Area Management Action Plan at http://www.citypaper.com/2002-07-10/mobs.html

Baltimore Motorcoach Information

The Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association (BACVA) is pleased to provide you with this important motorcoach information.

Your coaches are important to us!

Please adhere to these loading, unloading and parking instructions to make your visit pleasant. However, unattended, illegally staged/parked vehicles or unauthorized street loading may result in traffic citations up to $77.00.

Loading and Unloading Zone

Area One (West)

Light Street, Inner Harbor

Loading and unloading is allowed on the northbound lane of Light Street, next to the Inner Harbor (between the Science Center & Harborplace). No staging allowed.

Area Two (North/East)

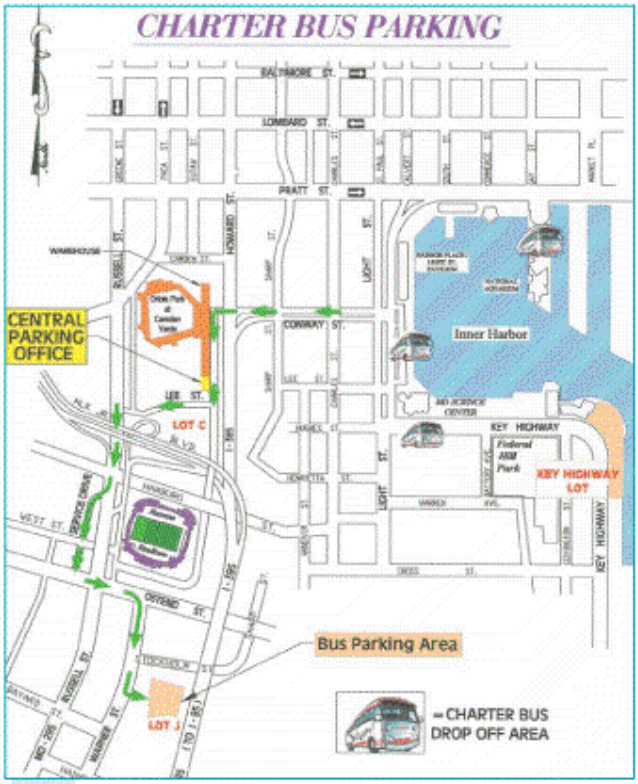
Pratt Street, Inner Harbor, at the National Aquarium in Baltimore

The National Aquarium in Baltimore is sanctioned for loading and unloading on the north side of the Inner Harbor. No staging allowed. The National Aquarium in Baltimore is scheduled to begin expansion construction in September 2002. From the fall of 2002 to the spring of 2005, the Aquarium's bus turn-around area will be slightly reduced in size and may affect disembarking time. Please consider this in the timing of your itineraries.

Area Three (South)

Key Highway, Inner Harbor at the Maryland Science Center

Loading and unloading is allowed on Key Highway, south of the Maryland Science Center. There is 10-minute staging only.



Parking your Coach

Maryland Stadium Authority Lot J

Central Parking Systems, 410-347-9330

From Light Street, head west on Conway Street. At I-395, stay in right lane and proceed straight into the Camden Yards parking lot. Follow the drive aisle to the left and stop near the far end of the Warehouse Building. Enter the Office of Central Parking Systems and pay the parking fee. You will then be given directions to Lot J off of Russell Street.

Rates:

- Daytime entry: $20
- Orioles baseball games: $20
- Ravens football games: $60
- Overnight parking requires payment for 2 days of parking: $40.00

For further details to book parking in advance, call Central Parking Systems at 410-347-9330.

Key Highway Lot

Central Parking Systems, 410-685-2700

The south side parking facility is near AREA THREE at 801 Key Highway.

George Gilliam 410-977-2949.

Rates:

- Daytime entry: $24
- Overnight parking requires payment for 2 days of parking: $48

TOUR Baltimore!™

Tourism Department

1-800-343-3468, Ext.7040

grouptours@baltimore.org

2.1.6 Savannah, GA

Since 1992, with the publication of John Berendt's *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, visitation to Savannah has grown dramatically. In 1999, 6.5 million visitors arrived in Savannah. Because of the small, compact historic core, the destination for the great majority of visitors, the visitor to area ratio (per annum)[9] is an astounding 3,611,111 per 1 square mile. The compactness of the City and the large number of visitors has created resident-tourist-commercial interest conflicts. Using a similar approach to that of Charleston, Savannah has adopted a comprehensive tourism management approach, with the key implementation mechanism being a legally enforceable tour service ordinance[10].

Savannah's approach is to reduce private visitor vehicular traffic in the historic core, and to encourage transfer of passengers from large tour buses to more adaptable, smaller tour vehicles and trolleys. Savannah achieves these desired target goals in two ways: (1) intercepting visitors at a Visitor's Center[11] strategically accessible to but located outside of the historic core; and (2) adopting, to a limited degree, Charleston's strategy of building and owning (thereby controlling) the majority of parking spaces (structured facilities and surface lots) within or at the periphery of the historic core. The small compact size of the historic core permits visitors to park once at the periphery or in the core at municipal parking facilities and transfer to either circulator bus services or to walking mode.

The main legal mechanism for managing tourism, and in particular tour buses, is the Tourism Management Ordinance. Key aspects include the following:

- Required licensing or permitting of tour operators, and public display of required permit on each tour vehicle operating within the City; motor coaches (> 35 feet vehicles) are required to have a daily permit (date, destination and purpose) for operation within the historic district;
- Authority to remove from operation on the streets any tour vehicle in violation of ordinance articles (e.g., safety and mechanical defects);
- Establishment of non-exclusive stands on city streets, useable by tour vehicles on a first come-first served basis; loading and unloading of passengers restricted to designated tour vehicle stands;
- Leasing, on a long-term basis, stands at the Visitor's Center for use on an assigned basis by tour operators;

[9] See, Newport Collaborative Architects, Inc., *Coping with Success: A Study of Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia, Reduction of Traffic Congestion Through Inter modal Transportation, Parking and Tourism Management Systems*, October 2000, pp. 16-17.

[10] See, City of Savannah, Tour Service Ordinance, 1999, at http://www.ci.savannah.ga.us/cityweb/revordinances.nsf/c346e891f01bea7e85256b06004cd58a/30862fc1bf5acfb28525680f0071b7d8/$file/tour_services_ordinance

[11] Crucial factors for the success of an intercept strategy using a gateway-type Visitor Center are its location outside of the congested historic core, ample on-site parking, full-service information systems and competent staff, and easy linkage to the City's efficient public and tourist transportation systems. If any one of these components is missing, the likelihood of success is greatly diminished. Adaptation and/or reuse of an attractive historic building, while not critical, is helpful too in that the building housing this tourism function also becomes a destination in itself, drawing visitors to it.

- Restriction of tour bus parking to designated holding zones, with return to the historic district allowed for loading of passengers only;
- Publication of a street map identifying streets on which tour vehicles are prohibited at all times;
- Requirement for tour operators to submit and have approved specific routes for access, egress and serving attractions within the historic district;
- Designating authority for the City Manager to establish tour bus activity density and traffic controls within the historic district, upon recommendation of the Tourism Advisory Committee and/or City staff:
  - A maximum of two tour vehicles may be present on a square or street segment at the same time;
  - Tour vehicles are limited to a maximum of one trip around a square during the course of a tour.

Relevance to the District: Many of the elements that Savannah employs to manage tour bus operations – on-street tour vehicle stands, adequate holding or parking zones strategically located, municipal parking for residents, visitors and employees, and designated/approved routes and street use prohibitions - are essential strategies needed for sound parking management. The District should emulate these concepts.

DC Code, 2001 Ed. § 50-2609 forbids the acquisition of land by the city to build municipal parking. One unintended consequence is that the growth of population and vehicles has placed enormous pressure on using scarce curbside space to accommodate resident and commuter parking needs. This works to the disadvantage of commercial and tourism interests, which require accessible and extensive curbside space for critical loading and unloading operations. Both Charleston and Savannah have been able to moderate the competitive demands for parking by residents, visitors and employees by building and operating municipal parking facilities that generate a positive net income stream. This has also permitted curbside management to be rationalized within both cities, with care taken to optimize the economic development value to the City by allocating or designating adequate space for commercial use.

Savannah, like Charleston, has provisions allowing for the establishment of limits on tour bus activity tour within the city's historic district. Enforcement of these types of restrictions would be difficult within the much larger area served by tour buses in the District. The scale and configuration of the square and street plan (the 1733 Oglethorpe plan) within Savannah is unique and vastly different from the street network of Washington, DC.

2.1.7 Atlantic City, New Jersey

The major destinations in Atlantic City are the casinos and boardwalk. Motor coaches traveling to casinos that lack facilities to accommodate tour buses are required to first stop at a South Jersey Transportation Authority intercept lot. Some casinos have

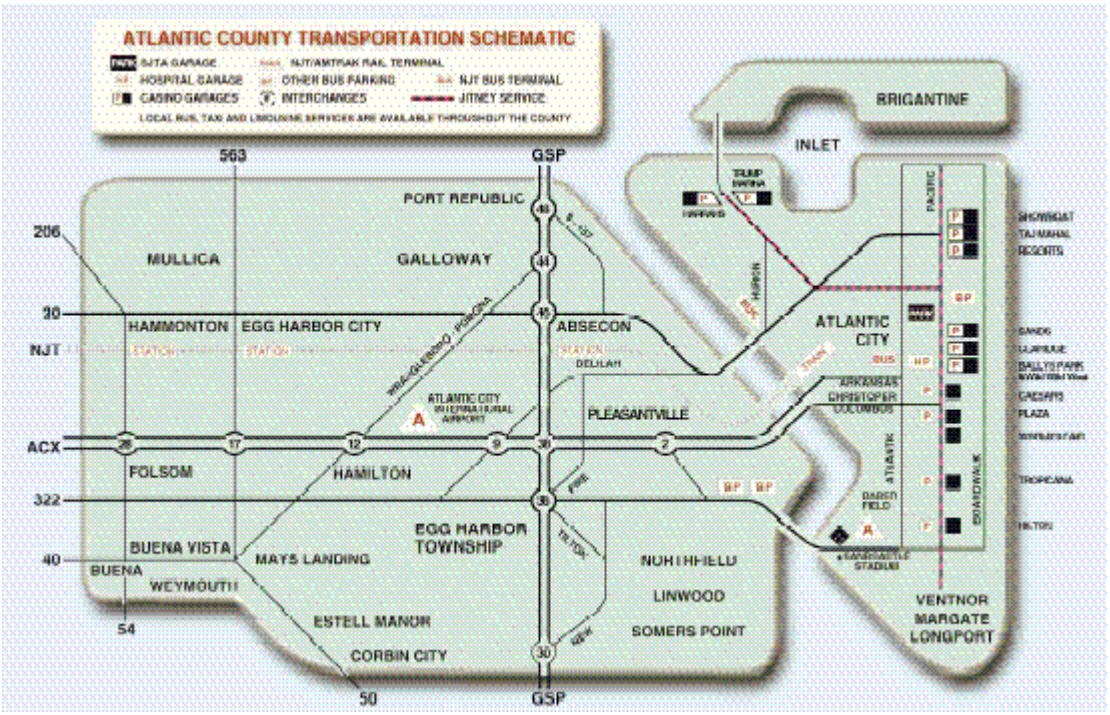
facilities for drop-off, pick-up and bus parking. Procedures have been developed to minimize the time and inconvenience associated with the use of intercept lots. Each casino has a Bus Marketing Department that provides operators with their Authority-approved intercept location, as well as other applicable regulations (see schematic below). Intercept lots are strategically sited to provide good accessibility to the casinos. There is also a jitney service that provides service between the intercept lots and the casinos (as well as passenger distribution among the casinos). Operators pay either a $2 single entry bus management permit fee or $4 per bus for an unlimited daily medallion. Operators are required to display either the permit or medallion on the vehicle.

After passengers are discharged at an Authority approved site, tour bus operators must park in a South Jersey Transportation Authority approved bus parking facility. When returning to pick up passengers, operators are instructed not to arrive more than fifteen (15) minutes prior to scheduled departure. South Jersey Transportation Authority also operates an Operator's Help-Line. Duty supervisors are on duty seven days per week from 8:30 AM to 12 midnight.

Because Atlantic City is located on a small island and welcomes over 400,000 buses annually, specific routes are detailed for traffic management purposes (see map below). Routing information is sent to each operator upon payment of the bus management fee. In particular cases and for special reasons, the Authority may grant a variance from designated routes, sites for loading and discharging passengers, parking and/or intercept.[12]

Bus operators must register with individual casinos and must reserve and confirm each individual trip. To register a motor coach/tour, operators must contact the Bus Marketing Department of an individual casino to receive a registration packet, which is to be completed and returned prior to arrival. Operators, in general, must provide liability insurance bond (> $5 million); Interstate Commerce Commission and the U.S. Department of Transportation authority; a list of officers, owners of the company and others authorized to do business; and a list of equipment in use by the company.

[12] http:// www.sjta.com/bus/approvedcity.html


ATLANTIC COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SCHEMATIC
NJTA GARAGE
NJT/AMTRAK RAIL TERMINAL
HOSPITAL GARAGE
OTHER BUS PARKING
NJT BUS TERMINAL
CASINO GARAGES
INTERCHANGES
JITNEY SERVICE
LOCAL BUS, TAXI AND LIMOUSINE SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY
563
GSP
BRIGANTINE
INLET
PORT REPUBLIC
206
MULLICA
GALLOWAY
30
HAMMONTON
EGG HARBOR CITY
ABSECON
NJT
ATLANTIC CITY
PLEASANTVILLE
ACY
FOLSOM
HAMILTON
322
EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP
BUENA VISTA
40
BUENA
MAYS LANDING
NORTHFIELD
WEYMOUTH
LINWOOD
54
ESTELL MANOR
SOMERS POINT
VENTNOR
MARGATE
LONGPORT
CORBIN CITY
50
GSP


ATLANTIC OCEAN
UPTOWN
DOWNTOWN
MIDTOWN
MARINA
ABSECON INLET
ATLANTIC CITY APPROVED ROUTES

***Relevance to the District*:** Atlantic City, NJ is unique, and not comparable in most important respects to the District. Nevertheless, there are a number of useful concepts that may be transferable to the District, including the provision of well-sited intercept lots to service attractions that do not have adequate parking and loading/unloading facilities. The viability of intercept lots depends, however, on the availability of parcels (land acreage is essential) and accessibility to major attractions (with good streetscape to encourage walking) that that can be serviced by a high-quality distributor system. As in Charleston and Savannah, a tourist transit system differentiated from the public regional transit system (but with appropriate linkages) and with its own branding is critical if the concept of *intercept lots with passenger transfer* is to work. All this must be seamless, entail little or no waiting time, and feel like part of the visitor's experience.

A staffed Operator's Hot Line is another feature of Atlantic City's approach with potential application in the District, as is the designation of specific tour bus routes. Advanced registration and reservation by major attractions is another concept that may bear further investigation, although the scheduling of multi-stop itineraries among large numbers of tour bus operators is a difficult problem, even with a sophisticated computer system.

2.1.8 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

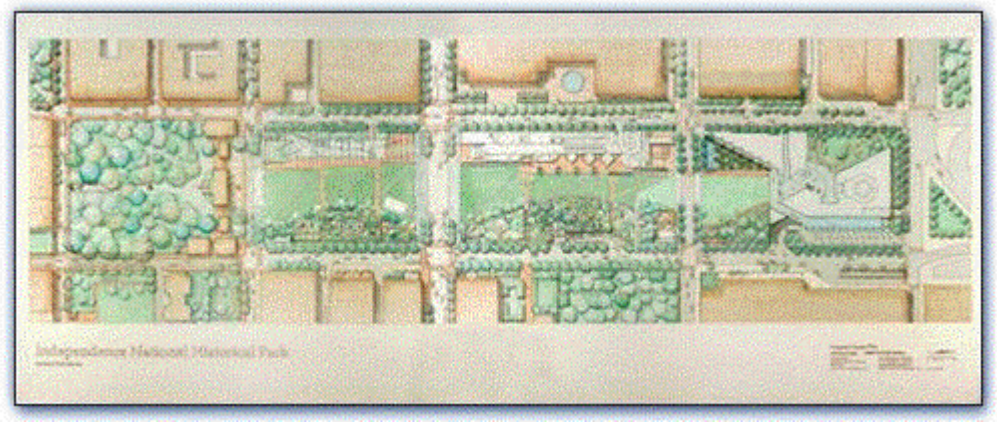
There are many similarities between Philadelphia and the District. Within the central city lies a monumental core (Independence Mall) that includes the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, both of which comprise elements of the National Park Service's Independence National Historic Park (INHP). Market and Chestnut streets, the two quintessential Philadelphia commercial streets within Center City, bound the first block of INHP.

Forty percent of the three million annual visitors to INHP arrive by tour or school bus. This amounts to about 24,750 buses per year, with over 60 bus arrivals per hour during peak periods. Currently, buses ring the 3-block Mall much of the day, blocking other traffic and pedestrian movement, causing visual clutter, and polluting the mall area with exhaust fumes. All of these negative externalities detract from the visitor's experience and enjoyment. These problems are likely to increase, as bus arrivals during peak hours are expected to grow to 85 per hour.

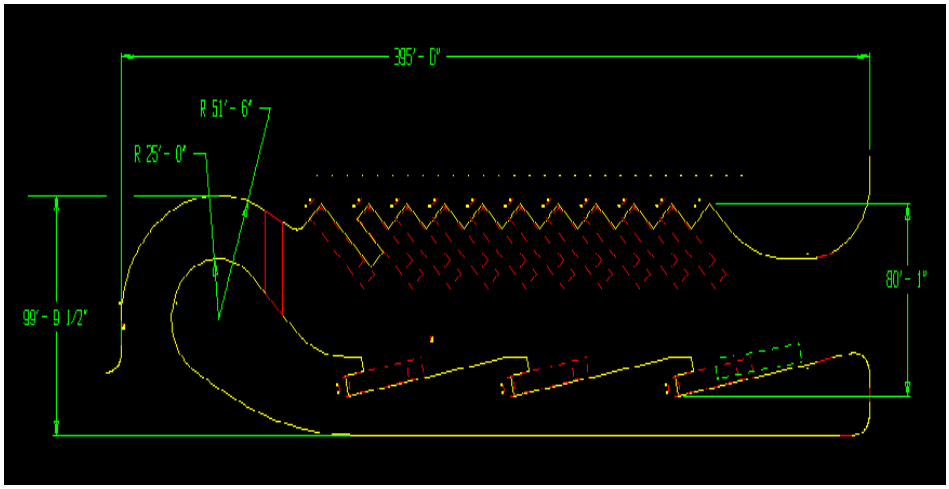
The National Park Service, working with the City of Philadelphia and multiple additional stakeholders, has developed a unique design solution[13] to address these issues. As part of its General Management Plan for the park, the National Park Service partnered with a design team headed by the Olin Partnership to produce a new master plan and design guideline for the Mall. In summary form (see schematic below), the master plan proposes the following:

[13] At the request of the National Park Service, US DOT/RSPA/Volpe Center provided a critical design review of alternatives for a bus terminal, recommended design and operational modifications that informed the preferred alternative, and developed a field test protocol and conducted the field test of the preferred alternative. See, US DOT/RSPA/Volpe Center, *Evaluation of Bus Management Options for Independence National Historic Park*, May 18, 2000; see, also, *ITC Field Test Memorandum for Independence National Historic Park*, December 12, 2000.

- Block 1, between Chestnut and Market Streets, will include a new Liberty Bell pavilion, a First Amendment Rights area, ceremonial space, and new restrooms. Block 2, between Market and Arch Streets, will feature the new Gateway Visitor Center, the Independence Park Institute, improvements to the underground parking garage, and an outdoor café, special events space, and better access to the Free Quaker Meeting House.
- Block 3, between Arch and Race Streets, will highlight the new, Congressionally-authorized National Constitution Center (NCC) museum, a park maintenance facility that will be part of the NCC building program, the National Constitution Memorial, and a new gateway element that marks the Park's northern boundary and beckons the visitor to enter.

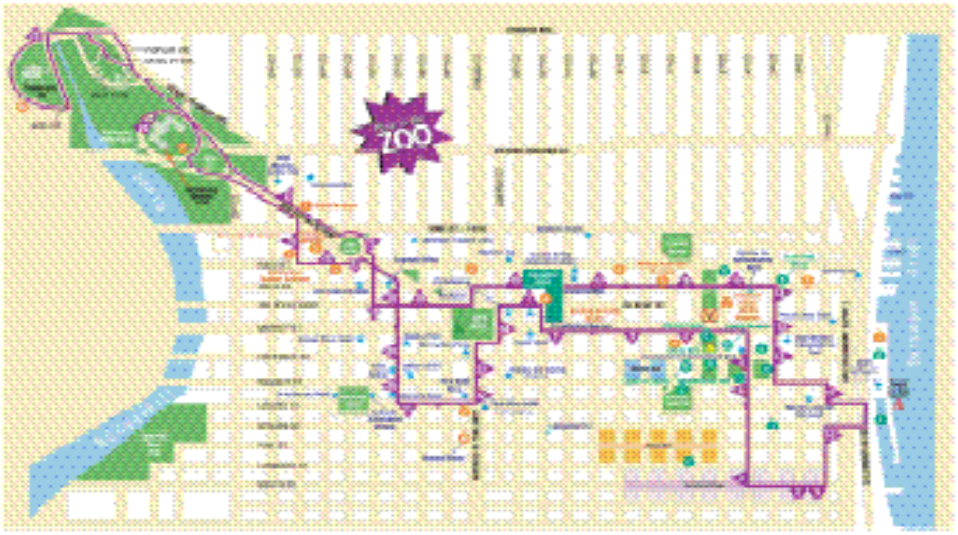


Construction of the new National Constitution Center museum on the third block has provided the opportunity to solve the problems currently created by the 'wall' of buses attracted to the Mall and the commercial core. A bus terminal, known as the Independence Transportation Center (ITC), will be integrated with the museum. The ITC will consolidate all bus passenger loading and unloading operations within a compact and well-landscaped space on the northeast corner of Block 3. A schematic of the ITC is illustrated below. In addition to the fourteen (14) bus bays in the ITC, two (2) additional recessed bus bays are located on the northern boundary (Race Street) of the park.



In support of the effort to revitalize the Independence Mall, Philadelphia has programmed in its capital budget $800,000 for the construction of a long-term tour bus parking lot in the median of I-95, south of Callowhill Street. Buses that drop off passengers at the ITC will proceed to this facility, with return to the ITC for passenger pick up.

Another element of the Philadelphia tour bus program has been a tourist transit system that provides a high frequency circulator and distribution service. A schematic of the system (referred to as the Philly Phlash see http://phillyphlash.com/map.html) is illustrated below. The system has been operated from 1994 through Labor Day 2003 and carried 30,000 visitors in the summer of 2002. The City considered terminating the Plash this year due to budget constraints, but decided to continue the service through last summer. The long-term future of the Phlash is currently undecided.



Relevance to the District: Philadelphia has a number of important characteristics in common with the District. Parallels include the nature of tourism demand and the issues and problems experienced due to a high volume of motor coach traffic in a compact, historic, and monumental core area. Design solutions need to be sensitive to the nature of the hallowed ground that draws the millions of visitors each year.

Except for the Ellipse and certain segments of the National Mall (where such a facility could be placed underground), there are few parcels available to build a compact bus terminal in the core area of Washington, DC. A strategy combining improved allocation of loading/unloading space in the monumental core, combined with long-term parking at the periphery of the downtown area and other measures, appears to be more promising. One of the additional measures that should be considered is connecting peripheral parking to destinations in downtown DC with a high-quality distributor/circulator service, such as the Philly Phlash.

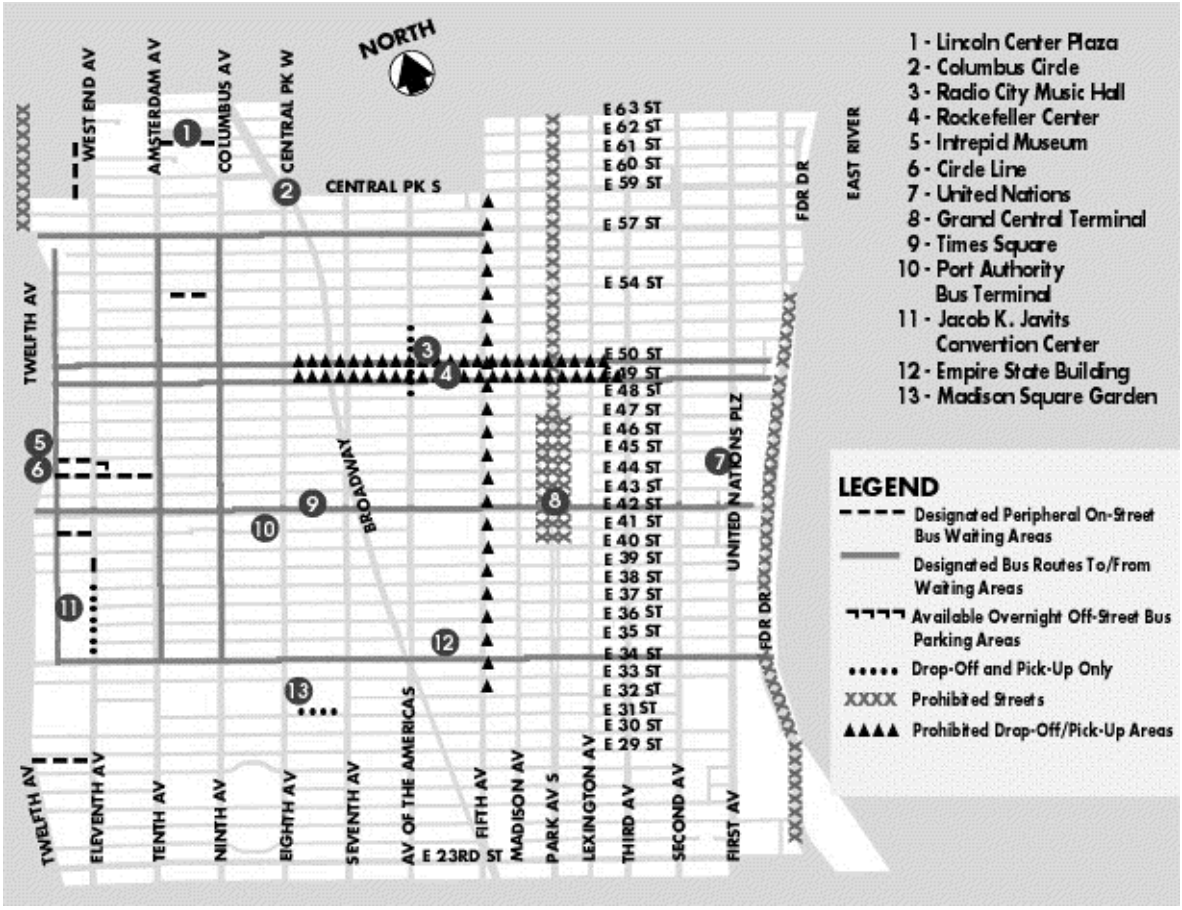
2.1.9 New York, New York

New York City has a well-conceived plan for managing tour buses. Design elements include the following:

- Allowing passenger loading and unloading operations within "No Parking", "No Standing" and "No Standing except Trucks Loading and Unloading" zones
- On-street parking and waiting areas on designated peripheral streets (peripheral, that is, to the main tourist attractions) where buses are instructed to wait after discharge and before pick-up
- Designated special drop-off and pick-up areas (that do not allow long-term parking), with designated routing (generally the same as truck routes) to these locations
- Restricted street list
- Prohibited drop-off and pick-up areas (violation subject to towing)
- Designated bus routes to/from Mid Manhattan waiting areas
- Designated off-street parking facilities
- No idling beyond 3 minutes
- Requirement to pay for and display sticker per trip ($1.50 per trip), available however in books of ten

NYC DOT also provides useful help-lines for contact depending on the nature of the issue/problem or inquiry. A sense of the integrated nature of the plan is conveyed by the maps (midtown, and lower Manhattan respectively) shown on the following pages.[14]

[14] http://www.nyclink.org/html/dot/html/get_around/bus/charterbus.html


NORTH
WEST END AV
AMSTERDAM AV
COLUMBUS AV
CENTRAL PK W
CENTRAL PK S
TWELFTH AV
BROADWAY
UNITED NATIONS PLZ
FDR DR
EAST RIVER
E 63 ST
E 62 ST
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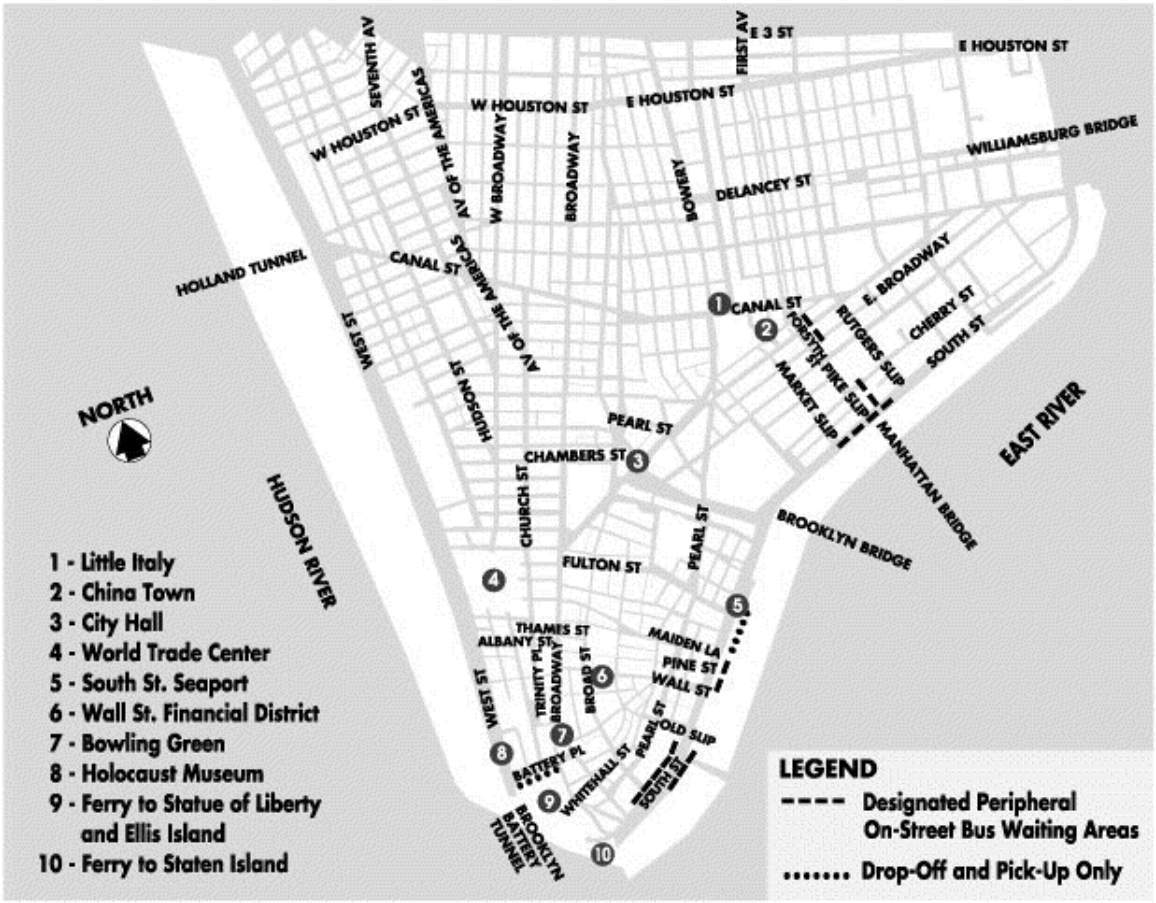
TWELFTH AV
ELEVENTH AV
TENTH AV
NINTH AV
EIGHTH AV
SEVENTH AV
AV OF THE AMERICAS
E 23RD ST
FIFTH AV
MADISON AV
PARK AV S
LEXINGTON AV
THIRD AV
SECOND AV
FIRST AV
1 - Lincoln Center Plaza
2 - Columbus Circle
3 - Radio City Music Hall
4 - Rockefeller Center
5 - Intrepid Museum
6 - Circle Line
7 - United Nations
8 - Grand Central Terminal
9 - Times Square
10 - Port Authority Bus Terminal
11 - Jacob K. Javits Convention Center
12 - Empire State Building
13 - Madison Square Garden
LEGEND
Designated Peripheral On-Street Bus Waiting Areas
Designated Bus Routes To/From Waiting Areas
Available Overnight Off-Street Bus Parking Areas
Drop-Off and Pick-Up Only
Prohibited Streets
Prohibited Drop-Off/Pick-Up Areas



Relevance to the District: New York City's tour bus management plan effectively serves the industry and economy of the city yet also balances the needs of neighborhoods. The essential design elements are worth emulating by the District. Of particular interest is the concept of a not-too-onerous per trip permitting fee. Such a user fee could provide a useful revenue stream to the District that could be dedicated to the operational and maintenance requirements associated with providing adequate long-term tour bus parking facilities within the District.

2.1.10 Kennebunkport, Maine

Responding to resident concerns over the large volume of buses operating in the narrow and winding streets and dense commercial core of the town during peak season[15], Kennebunkport ME has instituted an advanced reservation system. Like Charleston SC, the ordinance establishing the advanced reservation system also places an absolute limit on the number of tour buses operating simultaneously in the town. Essential elements of the ordinance include:

[15] According to a traffic survey of tour buses done by the Kennebunkport Police Department, for the past five years 62 percent of the estimated 1,000 buses that come to town do so during the Fall foliage season (September-October), see http://www.seacoastonline.com/2001news/yorkstar/ys6_27b.htm

- Requirement to secure advanced permit (3 days in advance of trip) to operate within the town, peak season (May 1 to November 1)
- Advanced reservation system to operate between the hours of 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM, peak season
- Requirement for permit fee ($35)
- Discharge area limited to south side of Cross Street only
- Control on the number of permits issued to achieve a flow rate in the core district of no more than three (3) tour buses per hour loading, and three (3) buses per hour unloading

The selection of a good location and facility for long-term parking is still unsettled.

***Relevance to the District*:** The ordinance has been legally challenged and is now being adjudicated by the Federal court. An emergency relief injunction was denied, however, that would have blocked implementation of the ordinance.[16]. In public hearings, the attorney representing the Kennebunk-Kennebunkport Chamber of Commerce expressed concern that the ordinance might be considered a restraint on trade and a violation of the equal protection and interstate commerce clauses[17]. Similar issues raised by Charleston's tour bus ordinance apply to Kennebunkport's attempt to limit the flow rate of tour buses in the core district. Unless the recommendation for an absolute flow restriction is clearly grounded in a comprehensive and validated study that establishes it as a reasonable accommodation to protect the public health, safety and welfare, an ordinance that contains this type of restriction is vulnerable to legal challenge.

As noted previously, the concept of an advanced reservation system, while attractive, poses technical difficulties when applied to multi-destination tour bus itineraries.

2.2 European Experience

Recent research into tour bus parking conditions in European cities reveals a number of insights concerning tour bus operations and management practices:

- To an even greater degree than in the U.S., tourist attractions frequently are clustered in the historic sections of cities where development densities are high and streets are very narrow, such that circulation by buses is difficult, if not impossible.
- City size is a key determinant of the number, location, and use of tour bus parking areas. The limiting size of a small area that can be served by a single, centralized tour bus facility is approximately 0.6 square miles (1.5 km^2).
- Vehicular circulation within historic centers is minimal; buses typically drop-off passengers at a single location within or close to a historic area.
- Guided itineraries with multiple destinations within historic districts typically are conducted on foot, with buses parked outside the historic center.

[16] See http://www.centralmaine.com/news/stories/o20824buses_kj.shtml and http://www.centralmaine.com/news/stories/020829buses_9_.shtml

[17] See http://www.seacoastonline.com/2001news/yorkstar/ys6_27b.htm

- In larger cities, tour buses sometimes convey passengers among sites that are distributed throughout a large geographic area, parking in reserved spaces that typically are curbside (either parallel parked or in bays) less than 1/3-mile (500 meters) from passenger destinations, or in separate parking areas farther away. In cities where parking is located at a peripheral location, loading/unloading areas are less than 1/5-mile from the groups' destinations. Walking time generally is limited to 5 – 10 minutes.

- A common practice is to drop-off tour groups near a site with relatively good vehicle access and pick-up the groups at a pre-arranged location later in the day. In-between pick-up and drop-off, the tour bus group travels on foot to multiple locations.
- In several cities, such as Edinburgh, loading/unloading and parking occur at a terminal away from the city center and passengers transfer at the terminal to smaller buses. In the medium-sized cities of Dusseldorf and Nurenberg, each with a population of approximately 500,000, travel times in shuttle buses between the tour bus parking area and attractions are a maximum of 15 minutes.
- By pre-arrangement, tour buses frequently are allowed to drop-off and pick-up passengers at hotels in areas where tour bus circulation otherwise is prohibited.

Vienna is an example of a major European city (population 1.5 million) with numerous small tour bus parking areas located throughout sections of the city that have major tourist attractions. A coordinated fee structure is in place under which the use of parking areas closer to the city center requires a fee, while peripheral lots are free of charge, thus encouraging use of less-centrally located parking areas. The duration of parking is restricted to a fixed amount of time (1.5 or 2 hours) at individual parking areas. Amsterdam is another example of a large city (population 718,000) with tour bus parking spaces broadly distributed throughout the city, all at a significant distance from the historic center. The total capacity provided is approximately 170 spaces, at distances ranging from 1/3 mile to just over ½ mile (500 – 1000 meters) from primary tourist destinations. Fees are charged for parking, as they are in Edinburgh's tour bus terminal, located outside the central city. Munich has 9 tour bus facilities, with capacity of about 970 spaces, located between 1/3 mile to nearly 2 miles from tourist destinations.

Paris is an example of a major city where tour bus parking is located largely in broadly dispersed on-street spaces, either parallel to the curb or in small parking bays. These spaces are free and there are no time restrictions governing their use.

Smaller-size cities generally offer better opportunities for centralized boarding facilities, with either remote parking or parking located on-site. Salzburg (population 144,920) is a prime example of a city served by a single, centralized boarding area that is close to

the historic city center (about 1/5 mile or 300 meters). Several peripheral parking areas for buses are located at a significant distance (2 – 2.5 miles) from the center. In contrast, a single central boarding *and* parking facility serving tour buses is located close to the city's attractions in Innsbruck (population 120,000).

Several cities use shuttle buses to transport tour bus passengers between peripheral parking facilities. In the medium-sized cities of Dusseldorf and Nurenberg, each with a population of approximately 500,000, travel times in shuttle buses between the tour bus parking area and attractions are a maximum of 15 minutes. As noted previously, Edinburgh is an example of a large city that uses shuttle buses to connect a remotely-sited parking terminal to the historic city center.

A number of European cities, including Munich, have control systems in place to direct tour buses to available parking areas or away from streets that are closed . Vienna is planning a control system. Signage directing tour buses to parking areas or recommended routes represent an important component of these systems.[18]

2.3 Summary Findings

The review of best practices identifies the following common elements of tour bus management plans that appear to work in other cities, many of which may have applications in the District:

- Dedicated locations for pick up and drop off for tour buses
- Designated routes to/from the central core and arterial and highway system, and designated routing between visitor attractions, generally bypassing sensitive areas such as residential districts and historic districts
- Dedicated locations (usually distributed around the periphery of the core business and cultural district) for long-term parking, and fee structures that encourage usage. Site selection typically is based on three principal factors:
  - operational needs of tour operators: site locations accessible to core attractions and associated drop off and pick up locations; opportunities to provide service facilities for drivers and vehicles.
  - avoidance of preempting higher-value development or redevelopment opportunities, in accordance with the city's comprehensive land use and economic development plan for identified land parcels.
  - minimal impact on adjacent land uses.

[18] The source of published information on European tour bus operations is *Stadvertraegliche Bedien- und Parkkonzepte fuer Reisebusse in der Stadtouristic*, Berdicte der Bundesansatalt fuer Strassenwesen, August 1999.

- Designation of on-street tour bus parking areas; use of designated zones for on-street tour bus parking;
- Generation of revenue from metered tour bus parking spaces and off-street parking facilities;
- Shared use of curb space and off-street tour bus parking facilities by multiple institutions and types of users (e.g. tour buses and delivery trucks);
- Maps and other media for communicating the locations of parking and loading/unloading areas as well as designated routes;
- User-friendly "hot lines" available to operators and/or the general public
- In some cities, advanced reservation systems affect a more even and predictable distribution of tour buses throughout the day.
- Rules, regulations and policies affecting tour bus operations and a mechanism for conveying this information to current and prospective tour bus/group tour operators. Examples are:
  - Limits on idling
  - Legally enforceable designated routing on street network
  - Display of placards showing current inspection of vehicle
  - Restrictions on loading/unloading or parking in other than designated areas and curbside locations;
- Permitting and licensing of tour buses;
- Coordinated signage/control systems to guide tour buses and in some cases, to provide real-time information on street closings and parking availability
- Europe offers several examples of remote tour bus parking/terminal facilities linked to tourist destinations by shuttle bus systems
- Dedicated physical facilities for tour buses (drop off, pick up and parking) are identified on the basis of a collaborative, consensus approach by stakeholders via the mechanism of a committee or task force;
- A proactive approach that recognizes the economic development value of tourism (and tour buses) and that provides adequate and sufficient dedicated facilities for tour buses, rather than a reactive "NIMBY" approach that conveys the message, "Don't Park Here."